

Senate Bill 594

By: Senators Meyer von Bremen of the 12th, Golden of the 8th, Thompson of the 5th, Brown of the 26th and Reed of the 35th

AS PASSED SENATE

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

To amend Code Section 20-2-157 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to the uniform reporting system for certain purposes, so as to provide for weighting of grades for honors, advanced placement, and international baccalaureate courses for purposes of determining eligibility for postsecondary scholarships, grants, or loans; to provide for the establishment of minimum state-wide standards for honors courses; to provide for legislative findings; to provide for related matters; to repeal conflicting laws; and for other purposes.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF GEORGIA:

SECTION 1.

The General Assembly finds that the effect of the weighting of grades for coursework that is classified as advanced placement or international baccalaureate under Code Section 20-2-157 may discourage students from taking rigorous academic classes. Therefore, the General Assembly declares that it is in the best interests of the students of this state to appropriately recognize superior academic achievement by prescribing a weighting method for advanced courses for purposes of eligibility for the Hope scholarship program.

SECTION 2.

Code Section 20-2-157 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to the uniform reporting system for certain purposes, is amended by striking subsection (b) and inserting in lieu thereof the following:

"(b) Beginning May 1, 2007, each school system and private school shall adopt the reporting system described in this subsection for purposes of identifying and qualifying graduating seniors for the HOPE scholarship program and other programs identified in this Code section:

(1) Each school system and private school shall transmit, in a manner and at times prescribed by the Georgia Student Finance Commission, an electronic transcript of

1 courses and course grades for each graduating senior that reflects the complete high
2 school academic record of the student, including scores on any state tests required for
3 graduation, the grading scales used by the school system or private school for the time
4 periods referenced by the transcripts, and any other pertinent information as determined
5 by the Georgia Student Finance Commission. Each grade reported by a school system
6 or private school to the commission for the purpose of calculating the grade point average
7 for HOPE scholarship eligibility shall be the actual grade earned by the student, with no
8 weighting or addition of points by the local school system or private school;

9 (2) The Georgia Student Finance Commission shall calculate a grade point average for
10 the purpose of determining eligibility for the HOPE scholarship from these electronic
11 transcripts and shall notify students of their eligibility and high schools as to the
12 eligibility of students;

13 (3) For students otherwise qualified and enrolling as freshmen students in eligible public
14 or private postsecondary institutions for the first time on May 1, 2007, or thereafter, the
15 Georgia Student Finance Commission shall calculate grade point averages for
16 determining eligibility for the HOPE scholarship and other scholarships referenced in this
17 Code section as follows:

18 (A) For students receiving a college preparatory diploma, each grade for a student in
19 attempted coursework in English, mathematics, science, social studies, and foreign
20 language that would, if successfully completed, satisfy a core graduation requirement
21 for the college preparatory curriculum shall be equated to a grade on a 4.0 scale, such
22 that a grade of 'A' = 4.0, a grade of 'B' = 3.0, a grade of 'C' = 2.0, a grade of 'D' = 1.0,
23 and a grade of 'F' = 0; or

24 (B) For students receiving a career/technical diploma, each grade for a student in
25 attempted coursework in English, mathematics, science, and social studies that would,
26 if successfully completed, satisfy a core graduation requirement for the career/technical
27 curriculum shall be equated to a grade on a 4.0 scale, such that a grade of 'A' = 4.0, a
28 grade of 'B' = 3.0, a grade of 'C' = 2.0, a grade of 'D' = 1.0, and a grade of 'F' = 0.

29 Grades for coursework that is classified as honors, advanced placement, or international
30 baccalaureate shall be weighted by the Georgia Student Finance Commission in
31 calculating the overall grade point averages for students, ~~provided that the weighting of~~
32 ~~such course grades is uniformly applied to all students in the state taking the specified~~
33 ~~coursework~~ by adding 0.5 to the grade received by the student in such course, except for
34 a failing grade, such that a grade of 'A' = 4.5, a grade of 'B' = 3.5, a grade of 'C' = 2.5, a
35 grade of 'D' = 1.5, and a grade of 'F' = 0. The sum of the equated grades shall be divided
36 by the number of course grades, adjusted for term length, to yield a grade point average

1 on a 4.0 scale. No later than December 31, 2008, the State Board of Education shall
2 establish minimum state-wide standards for honors courses;

3 (4) Qualification for the HOPE scholarship shall be determined from the grade point
4 average calculated as set out in paragraph (3) of this subsection. Beginning May 1, 2007,
5 students with grade point averages equal to or in excess of 3.0 on the 4.0 scale with a
6 college preparatory diploma shall meet achievement standards for the HOPE scholarship;
7 students receiving a career/technical diploma shall meet achievement standards for the
8 HOPE scholarship with a grade point average equal to or in excess of 3.2 on a 4.0 scale.
9 This paragraph shall apply regardless of when a student graduated from high school and
10 regardless of such student's eligibility status prior to May 1, 2007; and

11 (5) Beginning May 1, 2007, only the reporting system as indicated in this subsection
12 shall be used to determine eligibility for all grants, scholarships, or loans to attend
13 colleges or universities which are administered pursuant to Article 7 of Chapter 3 of this
14 title and eligibility for enrollment in postsecondary courses pursuant to Code Section
15 20-2-161.1."

16 SECTION 3.

17 All laws and parts of laws in conflict with this Act are repealed.